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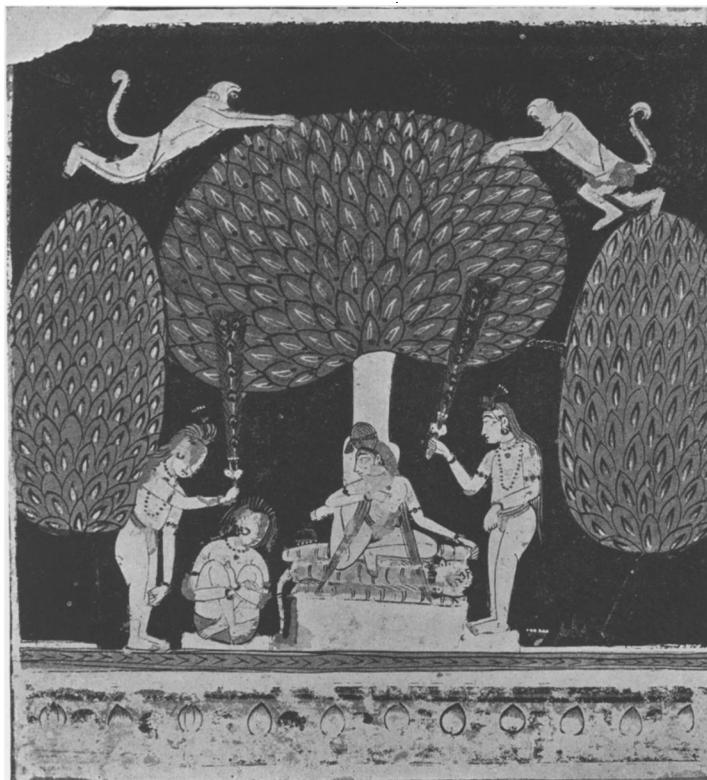
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Gandara Ragini

Rajput, 16th century

Gift of Denman W. Ross

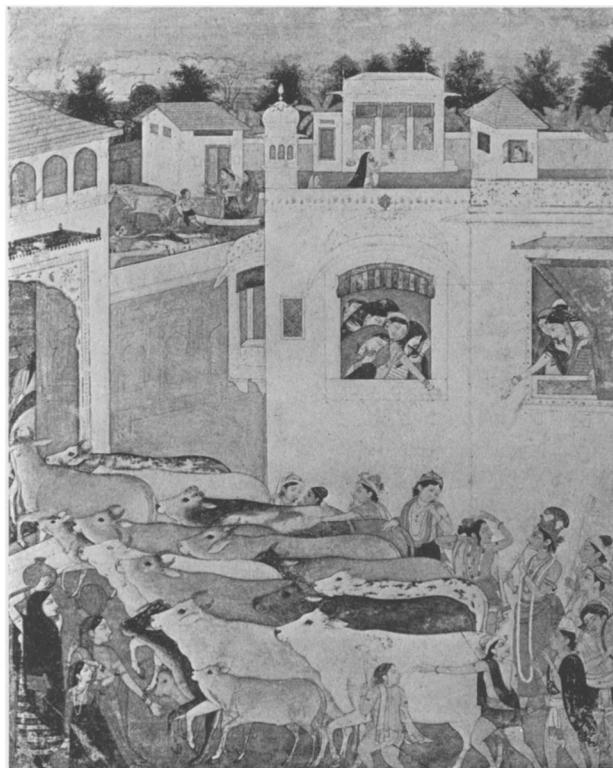
### Recent Acquisitions of the Department of Indian Art

#### TWO RAJPUT PAINTINGS

THE Museum has recently acquired by gift from Dr. Denman W. Ross two important Rajput paintings. The first, a leaf from a series illustrating a *Ragmala*, or Garland of Verses describing the musical modes, resembles the series of fifteen Rajasthani pictures of musical modes already in the Museum (Ross-Coomaraswamy Collection, M. F. A. Bulletin, No. 96), but is from a different series, slightly larger and more forcible in style. The scene is laid in a forest beside a lotus lake; a Saiva ascetic is seated beneath a tree, attended by two disciples waving peacock feather fly-whisks. On the ground beside him is a female ascetic (*yogini*) looking upwards at the *svami*. The Hindi verse inscribed at the back of the picture indicates that the beautiful *yogini*, "troubled by love-longing, sits like an offering in the dust, beside the *svami*, absorbed in adoration, with uplifted eyes and heart." The situation is precisely that of Parvati practising austerities in order to regain the love of Siva (lost to the world since she died as Uma, becoming *sati*); and this may well be the underlying significance of the picture, which gives the key to the burden of the musical mode.

Pictures of this school are essentially paintings; the brilliant and schematic drawing forms merely the foundation for the powerful color which appears in large unbroken masses. The contrast of the ivory-white figures and the strong red background is very marked. The disposition of the foreground, figures, trees, background and sky in their various planes is clearly rendered by the color rather than by the drawing.

The second picture, "The Hour of Cowdust," representing Krishna bringing back the herds to Brndahan at sundown, illustrates a theme already represented in the Museum by an exquisite drawing (Ross-Coomaraswamy Collection, M. F. A. Bulletin, No. 96) probably by the same hand. Krishna is seen on the right with his flute, and is accompanied by the other young herdsmen in a joyous group. Milkmaids leaning from the balconies are welcoming the home comers (we are reminded of the descriptions in Sanskrit literature, where the lotus faces of fair women leaning from the windows as it were adorn the walls with veritable flowers); and others who have been down to Jamna ghat to fill their water jars are seen on the left. The cows ("black, white, gray, purple, brown and blue") are streaming through a gateway into the farmyard, where Yasoda may be seen with Balarama; Father Nand is seated in the

*The Hour of Cowdust**Rajput, 18th century*

Gift of Denman W. Ross

central compartment of the little pavilion above, in conversation with his friends.

The Hour of Cowdust illustrates the latest development of Rajput painting in the Western Himalayas in the latter part of the eighteenth century, under the patronage of Raja Samsara Chand. A great change has taken place. The technique is now essentially one of draughtsmanship; the color is indescribably charming, but not essential to the language, which is perfectly expressive in the uncolored version of the same subject already referred to. There is a conscious approach to realism and a conscious beauty; the essential basis of the art is emotional rather than aesthetic; the poetry, in other words, is relatively more important, the decorative scheme less adequate when considered apart from the theme. The physical quality of the earlier painting most impresses us; in the later painting we are primarily moved by the exquisite rendering of a deeply loved theme. The two examples, each of the finest of its kind, admirably illustrate the two main types and periods of Hindu painting under Rajput patronage, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.

#### A FRAGMENT OF FRESCO FROM AJANTA

The fresco paintings on the walls of the excavated Buddhist monasteries and churches of Ajanta, in Central India (northern Dekhan), are

not merely the main source\* of our knowledge of Indian painting from the second century B.C. to the seventh century A.D., but the most important remains of ancient painting surviving anywhere in the world. All the themes are Buddhist: the paintings illustrate Buddhist theology, pseudo historical scenes of the Buddha's life, or more often the Jatakas or stories of the Buddha's previous incarnations. At the same time they present a detailed, varied, and living picture of contemporary life and a portrayal of animals, tame and wild, such as can nowhere else be found. Here are battles, coronations, dances, and hunting scenes, birth and death, riches and poverty, love and hate, wisdom and blindness, depicted in an almost endless and always moving panorama of edifying story-telling, by artists of great accomplishment, learning, and sensibility.

How great a change has come over Buddhism and Buddhist art since the beginning, a thousand years earlier than the average date of the caves! Buddhist thought has emerged from its monastic setting and become a part of the daily life of men — and animals — and in the process has been utterly transformed. The formal emphasis on the suffering which is inseparable from all existence is replaced by a profoundly sympathetic vision of life as a field of experience in which human

\*There are much less extensive remains preserved in the Ramgarh caves of Orissa, the Bagh caves in Central India, at Sittannavasal in Southern India, and at Sigiri, in Ceylon.



Buddhist Fresco      Ajanta, 6th or 7th century  
Purchased from the Clara Bertram Kimball Fund, 1921

impulses of love or hate are revealed in all their working, both for good and evil. The idea of Buddhahood and sainthood attained by pure self-discipline is replaced by the ideal of the Bodhisattva —a being dedicated to the salvation of all things, while he yet experiences life at its best and in the most exquisite environment of love and luxury. Ajanta painting is the counterpart of classic Sanskrit literature.

The work is technically fresco, though not quite like the fresco-painting of Europe, but rather a combination of fresco with tempera, a method still in use in India in which the surface of the plaster is kept moist until the painting is complete. At Ajanta the ground was prepared by applying a thick layer of a mixture of clay, cow dung, powdered rock to the walls of the excavated monastery or temple, this basis adhering firmly to the porous volcanic rock in which the excavations are made. Over this was spread a thin coat of fine white plaster. The subsequent procedure is practically identical with that of the late Mediæval Hindu (Rajput) paintings on paper. The composition is first outlined in red or black; "this drawing gives all the essentials with force or delicacy as may be required, and with knowledge and intention. Next comes a thinnish terra-verda monochrome showing some of the red through it; then the local colour; then a strengthening of the outlines with blacks and browns, giving great decision, but also a certain flatness; last a little shading if necessary. There is not much definite light and shade modelling, but there is great definition given by the use of contrasting local colour and of emphatic blacks and whites" (Herringham, *loc. cit. infra.*).

The frescoes were first rediscovered in 1819 and have become well known, chiefly through the copies made by Mr. Griffiths and his pupils, published in "*The paintings in the Buddhist cave temples of Ajunta*," London, 1896-97, and the more recent copies by Lady Herringham and others, published by the India Society as *Ajanta Frescoes*, Oxford, 1915. Still more recently coloured copies have been made by Japanese artists, and some of these have been well reproduced in the Kokka, Nos. 342, 345, 355, 366, 374. The frescoes can be better studied, however, in an extensive series of photographs taken by M. V. Goloubew, of which a few are published in Goloubew, V. *Peintures bouddhiques aux Indes.*: Ann. du Musée Guimet, Vol. 40, Paris, 1913; but only adequately studied on the spot with the aid of artificial light.\*

The Museum has lately been so fortunate as to acquire a fragment of Ajanta painting, perhaps the only part of the original frescoes now surviving apart from the remains *in situ*. Until last year, the fragment in question had remained in the possession of the descendants of General James Edwin Williams, by whom it was removed from the caves early in the nineteenth century. Nowadays the Ajanta paintings are happily protected from any further vandalism of the same kind, being in the care of the Director of Archaeology in H.R.H. the Nizam's dominions.

The fragment exhibits a group of four male figures complete from a little above the waist, a small fragment of another head, and some foliage. The two upper figures wear white headdresses and white garments; the third figure (left side) is nude so far as preserved; the proper left arm of this figure is linked with that of the youth below, who wears a white garment. Two of the faces show small mustachios; two of the five heads have curly hair, two have smooth hair, and another is shaved so as to leave four thick tufts of hair, of which one is concealed in the actual painting. The modelling is clearly indicated, and indeed emphasized, as is often the case with paintings of Cave II; this is not a representation of light and shade as such, but simply of the plastic relief. The basis of the painting, which is well preserved, though somewhat cracked, is the usual thin layer of fine plaster on a basis of dried mud mixed with fine chaff which was applied to the rock surface. The prevailing colors are sepia, warm dark brown, warm black, brownish sage green, and ivory white. The fragment is almost certainly part of an illustration to some Jataka.

The description given in Sotheby's sale catalogue refers the painting to Cave XVI on the basis of comparisons with Griffiths' copies at South Kensington, not reproduced in his book. The same inscription to Cave XVI (right aisle) has been made independently by Professor Cecconi

\*All the works and photographs above referred to may be consulted in the Library of the Museum of Fine Arts.



Surya Image

Indian, 1st or 2d century

Purchased from the Marianne Brimmer Fund, 1921

and Mr. Sayed Ahmad on the spot, by the kindness of Mr. Ghulam Yazdani, Director of H. R. H. the Nizam's Archaeological Department. The frescoes of Cave XVI, however, are now so much damaged, and the Griffiths copies at South Kensington so much injured by fire, that it would probably be impossible to identify the exact spot from which the fragment was removed. The fragment will be reproduced in color in the "Portfolio of Indian Art" to be published by the Museum early next year.

## SURYA (THE SUN-GOD)

Surya, that is to say, the sun as seen in the sky, is one of the early Vedic deities. As Savitar the Sun is invoked in the famous and daily repeated *Gayatri mantra* (a prayer) as the Enlightener in a spiritual sense. Many of the other divinities are more or less closely connected with the Sun, the affinity being nearest in the case of Vishnu (see Bulletin, No. 104, page 62). Those who worship the Sun specifically as the Supreme Being are known as Sauras; the cult was at one time far more widespread and popular than at the present day. The best known Sun temple is the "Black Pagoda" at Konarak.

Originally there is no trace of foreign influence in the Saura systems. But in the early centuries of the Christian era Iranian elements contributed to the development of sun-worship in Northern India, and Magas (the Magi of ancient Persia) are mentioned as priests of sun-temples. These elements,

combined with the indigenous mythology of the Sun, constitute the general basis of sun-worship in mediæval India, an important though minor element of Hindu sectarian religion.

Representations of the Sun are amongst the oldest Indian sculptures. One side of the façade of the early cave at Bhaja, near Poona, shows the sun god accompanied by two goddesses riding in a car drawn by four horses. This relief is probably earlier than the second century B. C.\* A similar representation, perhaps of the second century B.C., is seen in relief on a railing pillar at Bodh Gaya: here there are figures of Usha and Pratyusha to right and left of the Sun, driving away the darkness with their bows and arrows: a circular disc or nimbus frames the head (this may be the earliest known use of the glory or *sirasacakra* in Indian imagery).† A well-known Surya image of the Kushan period in the Mathura Museum (D. 46, illustrated below) shows the sun god squatting in a chariot, his knees raised, and holding unidentified objects in each hand. The car has one wheel and is drawn by four horses. The figure is framed within a large rayed disc, indicated in low relief on the surface of the slab, above the chariot.

A sculpture in cream sandstone, illustrated above, has been recently acquired by the Museum and is of the same period (perhaps of the first century A. D.) and style, but with further reduction of detail. The sun god is represented squatting, with raised knees, and holding a club in the right hand, a staff in the left. He wears a conical cap, or helmet, and chain armor; whether or not he is represented

\*Burgess, J., *Ancient Monuments . . . of India*, Part 2, pl. 178.  
†Rajendralala Mitra, *Buddha Gaya*, pl. XL; Foucher, A., *L'Art greco-boudhique du Gandhara*, Fig. 82; Marshall, J. H., in J. R. A. S., London, 1908, pp. 1096 ff. and pl. IV, Fig. 3. For a general account of Surya images see Rao, T. A. G., *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Part 2; Sastri, H. K., *South Indian Gods and Goddesses*; Bhattacharya, B. C., *Indian Images*, Part 1, Calcutta, 1921, pl. X; and Nagendranath Vasu, in *Archaeological Survey of Mayurabhanja*.



Surya Image Indian, 1st or 2d century

In the Mathura Museum

as wearing the high boots which are characteristic of the early northern type of Surya image cannot be quite clearly seen in the worn state of the sculpture, but the absence of any indications of toes appears to show that the feet are covered. The car is omitted, and of the four horses two only are clearly shown, springing to right and left below the seated figure; in a lateral view it can be seen that each of these horses represents a pair (in mediæval images and in the Konarak temple the number of horses is seven). The deity wears also the usual jewelry — earrings, necklace, bracelets, and possibly a sacred thread; whether or not he wears a waist cord cannot be seen. This figure, the earliest Brahmanical sculpture in the Museum collections, is an important example of its type. We are not at present concerned with the standing forms of Surya, which are mostly of later date and four-handed, two of the hands holding lotus flowers.

It may be mentioned here that the Museum possesses another Brahmanical sculpture of the Kushan or early Gupta period, the upper part of a red sandstone relief, showing Devi, four-armed, holding a sword and trident in the two upper hands. Another early Brahmanical figure, already alluded to, is the peculiar three-headed Vishnu of Gupta age, described in Bulletin No. 104.

ANANDA COOMARASWAMY.

### The Writings of Okakura-Kakuzo

A MEMORIAL publication of writings by the late Okakura-Kakuzo, at the time of his early death in 1913 Curator of Chinese and Japanese Art at this Museum, has just appeared in Japan. The publication has been undertaken as a pious duty by the Nippon Bijutsuin, or Fine Arts Academy of Japan, which was founded by Okakura twenty-four years ago to maintain the artistic ideals of Japan, at the time and since in danger from foreign influence. The Academy has continued to be a powerful factor in the later reassertion of an indigenous spirit in art, and has now gathered together such of the writings of its revered and lamented founder as had not already appeared in permanent form. These latter consist of Okakura's books originally published in English — "The Awakening of Japan" (New York, 1904), "The Ideals of the East" (London, 1903, and New York, 1904), and "The Book of Tea" (New York, 1906). The present memorial publication is in three parts. The first, in Japanese, contains a biographical sketch of Okakura-Kakuzo, various essays on art and kindred subjects, poems and familiar letters. The second, also in Japanese, contains Okakura's lectures at the Art School in Tokyo on the history of Japanese art. The third volume, in English, contains, with a number of essays, stories and poems, the libretto called "The White Fox," — Okakura's last production — which still awaits the Rimsky-Korsakoff or the Puccini who shall make it live on

the operatic stage. In issuing these volumes the Nippon Bijutsuin has made at once a substantial contribution to the cause of Japanese culture and a happy memorial to the strongest personal influence engaged in its defence.

### Note

"GREEK GODS AND HEROES as Represented in the Classical Collections of the Museum: a Handbook for High School Students prepared in conjunction with a Committee of Teachers by Arthur Fairbanks." A second edition of this publication has just appeared. The design of the book is to call attention through illustrations and a text to sculptures and paintings in the Museum representing the chief personages of classical mythology. In so far as this purpose is fulfilled, the reader may come to realize the personality of these beings through the arts of sculpture and painting as well as through the art of literature. In a word, the student may see the imaginative being about whom he is reading as the Greeks themselves saw it. The illustrations, wholly of objects in the Museum, are seventy-three in number. The text consists of a brief historical introduction followed by paragraphs descriptive of the divinities named and containing quotations from Homer, Virgil or Ovid, with translations. The book is sold at the entrance of the Museum for fifty cents and is sent postpaid for fifty-five cents. Orders may be addressed to the Secretary of the Museum.

### The November Story-Hours for Children

A SERIES of four story-hours was held on Saturday afternoons during November, to audiences of several score of children eight to fourteen years old. The stories were selected from Oriental legend — Persian and Japanese — and in all cases were such as could be illustrated by objects in the Museum collections. Lantern slides of these objects and of related works of art elsewhere were shown after the stories, and the audiences were then divided into two groups which were taken to see the objects spoken of and later brought back to the class room to make pencil memoranda of their afternoon, in the form of sketches either from fancy or from the objects shown them. The evident appreciation of the children was confirmed by the testimony of a number of grown-ups — teachers or parents — who were among the audiences.

Miss Wheeler, Assistant in Instruction, who was the story-teller, plans another series of stories in February, to be taken from East Indian sources. These will be duly announced in the press and by special notices.

AN EXHIBITION OF AMERICAN HANDICRAFTS, assembled and circulated by the American Federation of Arts, will be held at the Museum during the coming February.